

Conference Abstract

Earthquake Mitigation Solutions for Collections - Experience from New Zealand's National Museum

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Abstract

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, on the Wellington waterfront, has been developing its earthquake resilience since it was first built. The reclaimed land was compacted before building started and the building was built on base isolators (steel, rubber and lead shock absorbers) which help the building move with earthquakes, dissipating energy. Since building completion, there has been a steady implementation of earthquake mitigation systems.

Since 2010, New Zealand has experienced a series of strong earthquakes - Christchurch (2010-2011), Seddon (2013), and Kaikoura (2016). These sequences have instilled a perception that we are experiencing an extremely active geological period in New Zealand. And the last two events, in 2013 and 2016, had the greatest impact on the Wellington urban area. But earthquakes in New Zealand are constant. These more noticable events act as a test of earthquake resilience and motivate custodians to review current systems.

The first wave of most recent Te Papa investment to improve earthquake resilience occurred during 2012, after the Christchurch earthquakes. Since then, there has been a continuation of more focused solutions throughout Te Papa collection stores. A range of mitigation solutions were found for various containers and objects. We bolted, strapped, fastened and netted our way towards better collection storage. Practices around earthquake mitigation became part of our everyday collection management culture.

The work has been a collaboration between collection staff in order to discover the most creative and workable solutions, and these were transferred across collection areas. We will showcase some of our solutions, the elegant and not so elegant, and discuss lessons learnt.

Keywords

Earthquake, mitigation, solutions, museum, collections, culture

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Hosting institution

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